

Warming up: are you a competition junky?



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Imagine this - you're happily employed in a profitable fitness business, boasting a healthy and expanding customer base. However, dark clouds quickly appear on the horizon in the form of a similar business opening up nearby, which is promising to offer the latest, greatest and most immaculate experiences, equipment and amenities. So what do you do? Sensing the good times could be over, do you resign yourself to the fact your current business won't be able to compete, and quietly accept it? Do you sneak down the road and apply for a job in the sparkling new business? Or, do you welcome the competition and reignite your efforts in order to compete with this new player on the scene?

Truer words were never spoken than 'competition builds performance'. We are in competition every day with those we work with and with those in the industry at large. It is how we respond to this competition, and harness the challenge, that determines whether it has a positive or negative impact on our lives and livelihood.

Great athletes relish competition and are continually testing themselves against the best, using each experience to improve performance. In an elite team environment, the thinking coach will work just as hard to develop a competitive mindset within the team members, as they do when focusing on external competitors.

Competition should be embraced as an opportunity to improve one's self and become the best instructor, trainer or manager you can be. Just as personal trainers are competing against each other to attract the clients, or a centre manager is competing against other facilities, to some degree, a team of group fitness instructors need to compete against each other in order to build the performance and quality of the overall group exercise program on offer. Similarly, a healthy level of competition between gym floor staff should be encouraged as it can assist in the achievement of workplace outcomes, just as competition

between sales staff spurs the team towards greater levels of accomplishment.

Of course, competition isn't just about improving outcomes for ourselves and our businesses. It also works in favour of the customer, because, when shopping around, healthy competition between prospective sellers is something they'll look for in order to maximise value for their investment.

However, competition also works in our favour. Having competition nearby allows companies to keep an eye on each other. For example, take the car yard industry - where one dealer might have trouble surviving, a handful of dealers located alongside each other prosper collectively. Therefore, it can be beneficial for similar businesses to be located close together. Think about it - a group of similar businesses attract more customers to an area because there is more than one store to shop at. And secondly, customers can easily compare apples with apples, and in reality, choice stimulates demand.

It is important to remember that customers have choices. Even without competition, the customer can choose between buying and not buying. For example, in our industry, our customers might choose to purchase a gym membership, work with a personal trainer or neither.

Whether buying or selling, competition is a critical ingredient towards generating the optimum outcome for both our clients and for ourselves. We live in competitive times, and a critical ingredient to success is to harness this competitive environment to improve our own performance. Competition should be welcomed, sought out and relished, because by developing your own competitive mindset, you will improve your own business's performance. ♦



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